

# Japanese Tetrachordal Theory in Settings Old and New

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This file includes the abstract, keyword list, bibliography, and related material for the video essay, “Japanese Tetrachordal Theory in Settings Old and New” by Liam Hynes-Tawa. This video-essay may be found at <https://vimeo.com/societymusictheory/smtv106hynestawa>

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**Abstract for  
Japanese Tetrachordal Theory in Settings Old and New**

**by Liam Hynes-Tawa, *SMT-V* 10.6**

Most systems of music theory in wide use today are built on the idea of the octave as the most fundamental frame for pitch—notes an octave apart are said to be equivalent, and scales fill up the range of an octave. But some music came out of cultural spheres that did not think in terms of octave-framing. This video introduces the theory of three-note “tetrachords” used by ethnomusicologist Koizumi Fumio for the analysis of Japanese folk music, and demonstrates how this framework can be useful not only for Japanese folk music, but also for more recent music that is, while heavily Western and octave-framed in some ways, also informed by Japanese folk music. I argue through this analysis that those aspects are difficult to elucidate without a theory like Koizumi’s that is made outside of the octave frame.

**Short Keyword List**

scale, Japan, folk music, video game, octave, tetrachord

**Extensive Keyword List**

scale, Japan, folk music, video game, octave, tetrachord, ikkenjo, shikenjo, somewhere, rainbow, judy, garland, wizard, oz, zui, zukkorobashi, toryanse, mother, gameboy, advance, RPG, soundtrack, miyakobushi, ritsu, min’yo, minyo, Ryukyu, 音階, 日本音楽, 民謡, ゲーム, オクターブ, テトラコード, 一けんじょ, 四けんじょ, ずいずいずっころばし, 通りゃんせ, マザー, ゲームボーイ, OST, 都節, 律, 琉球

**About the Author**

Liam Hynes-Tawa is a lecturer at Harvard University whose research has mostly been in the music of modern Japan and Renaissance Europe, with recent publications in *Analytical Approaches to World Music* and *Intégral*, and upcoming ones in *Modeling Music Analysis* and *Sources in Historical Music Theory*.

## Recordings and Videos

### *Shikenjo*

“わらべうた 「いっけんじょ」 #Japanese lullaby #Japanese nursery rhymes.” ゆうまあま.  
September 24, 2020. Video, 00:02:07, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5HdonhYB4o>.

### *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*

“Somewhere Over the Rainbow - The Wizard of Oz (1/8) Movie CLIP (1939) HD.” Movieclips.  
May 26, 2011. Video, 00:02:42, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSZxmZmBfnU>.

### *Tōryanse*

“♪とおりゃんせ - Touryanse | ♪とおりゃんせ とおりゃんせ ここはどここのほそみちじゃ  
【日本の歌・唱歌】.” ボンボンアカデミー. November 30, 2015. Video, 00:01:43,  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cq4G5ku\\_r0w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cq4G5ku_r0w).

### *Zui zui zukkorobashi*

“♪ずいずいずっころばし - Zui Zui Zukkorobashi | ♪ずいずいずっころばし ごまみそずい  
【日本の歌・唱歌】.” ボンボンアカデミー. November 30, 2015. Video, 00:01:47,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFkwT2UDAuM>.

### *Mother 3 footage and music*

“MOTHER 3 #1 - Full Gameplay - No Commentary.” Lazy Blue. April 11, 2017. Video,  
01:46:24, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J\\_AR11RoDHA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_AR11RoDHA).

“MOTHER 3 #6 - Full Gameplay - No Commentary.” Lazy Blue. October 29, 2017. Video,  
02:27:35, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CsU0sXFKf10>.

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